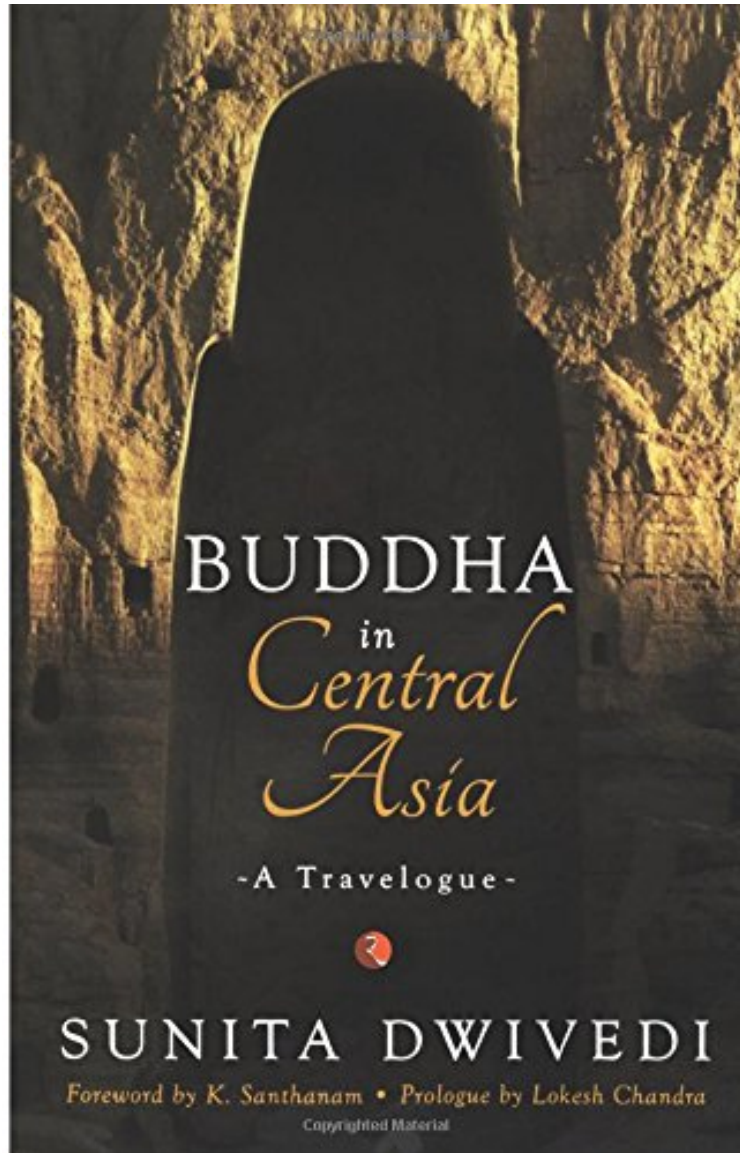


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Intrepid author, traveller and researcher, Sunita Dwivedi set out on an exhaustive journey through Central Asia in search of ancient statues of Buddha. Retracing the paths forged by great Buddhist monks over the centuries, she

negotiated scorching deserts, lush meadows, dry steppe lands, snowcapped mountains and gushing river valleys to chronicle the life and times of the many Budh viharas in which these statues had been instated. Drawing upon her extensive sojourns, Sunita recreates in this volume the bygone eras in which these shrines were once great centres of learning and devotion. And, juxtaposing past grandeur with the dereliction of the present, Sunita brings back to vivid life the holy path of dharma these viharas once espoused.

About the Author Sunita Dwivedi is a keen photographer, avid traveller and a journalist by profession, having worked in several dailies including The Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Pioneer and Northern India Patrika. She left a fulltime job in 1997 to pursue her passion for travelling and photography on the Silk Road through Asia and Europe. A postgraduate in English Literature from Lucknow University, she completed her schooling from St Mary s Convent, Allahabad and, Bachelors and Masters in Education from Allahabad University. She has authored two travelogues Buddhist Heritage Sites of India and In Quest of the Buddha: A Journey on the Silk Road. This is her third historiographical travelogue on the Buddhist sites in Central Asia from Afghanistan to Kazakhstan.